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Guidance Directive 2007-01

Secondary School Student Program: Policy Changes and Requirements Regarding the Placement of Exchange Visitors with Host Families

This is to inform the Secondary School Student sponsor community of some policy changes the Department intends to implement for the 2007-2008 academic year and to clarify certain regulatory requirements. Specifically, this memorandum will address double placement requirements and placement reports.

Double Placement Approval. The Department is putting into temporary abeyance the requirement that sponsors obtain prior written Department approval for the placement of two students with a single family, as set forth in 62 CFR 22.25(l)(ii). Sponsors must still collect the same documents for each double placement (i.e., student and natural parent consent, host family consent, school enrollment form) but they generally will not be required to submit these documents to the Department. A Final Rule on this regulatory revision will be published in the *Federal Register*. Sponsors may not place students from the same countries or with the same native languages in a single home. The Department will prohibit the placement of more than two students in a single home for any reason and for any length of time.

The Department recently conducted a review of the double placement requests submitted for approval during the 2006-2007 academic year and developed a set of four sample documents that contain all the necessary information sponsors should collect for any double placement:

- Student and Parent Agreement
- Host Family Agreement
- School Enrollment Form

These sample documents are attached to this memorandum as a courtesy to assist you in collecting all necessary information.

In lieu of prior approval of double placements, the Department intends periodically to conduct data requests from sponsors to ensure all regulatory and policy requirements are being followed. The Department will impose sanctions upon sponsors lacking the required double placement documentation.

Placement Reports. The Department is changing the reporting requirement for the bi-annual Placement Reports. Instead of submitting paper reports in sponsor-specific formats, sponsors are now required to submit these reports electronically, in a Department-designed Excel spreadsheet. A copy

of the spreadsheet accompanies this memorandum. Sponsors should submit the placement reports to the following email address: placementreports@state.gov.

Please note the addition of the names of local coordinators responsible for each student. Placement Reports are due August 31st for the fall semester and January 15th for the spring semester.

Historically, the Department has gained useful information from sponsors by reviewing the materials submitted with double placement requests. We believe, however, that the digitization of Placement Reports combined with increased SEVIS record analysis and industry-wide or sponsor-specific data requests can provide better data, while significantly reducing sponsors' administrative responsibilities during the busy placement period preceding each semester.

If you have any questions on any of these matters, please contact your Program Officer, Julia Findlay (findlayjm@state.gov) or Beth Melofchik (MelofchikBX@state.gov).

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